United Nations ST/AI/2000/2*

Secretariat

10 March 2000

Administrative instruction

Mobility and hardship allowance**

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 and for the purpose of implementing the provisions of staff rules 103.22 and 203.11, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

1.1 The mobility and hardship allowance (the "allowance") is a non-pensionable allowance which has three distinct elements:

(a) The mobility element, which varies according to the number of assignments and provides incentive for greater mobility of staff;

(b) The hardship element, which reflects the varying degree of hardship at different duty stations;

(c) The non-removal element, which compensates for the non-removal of personal effects and household goods.

1.2 The allowance is not considered an expatriate benefit, and may be paid to staff members serving in their home country, provided they are eligible and meet the conditions for payment of the allowance.

1.3 Payment of each element of the allowance is subject to the conditions set out in the present instruction.

Eligibility

1.4 Staff in the Professional category and above, Field Service staff and internationally recruited General Service staff appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules shall be eligible for payment of the allowance, provided they meet the requirements set out in section 1.5 and the conditions governing payment of the particular element of the allowance set out in sections 2, 3 and 4. Project personnel appointed under the 200 series of the Staff Rules shall also be eligible, subject to the same requirements and conditions.

1.5 Eligibility for payment of the allowance shall require an appointment to a duty station, or a reassignment to a new duty station, for a period of a year or longer, giving rise to an assignment grant under staff rule 107.20 or 203.10. However, the allowance may also be paid in the following cases:

(a) Appointment or assignment of less than one year, when it is decided to pay post adjustment and assignment grant under staff rule 103.7 (d) (ii). In such cases, the hardship and non-removal elements of the allowance shall be paid if the conditions set out in sections 3 and 4 are met;

(b) When an appointment or assignment of less than one year with payment of mission subsistence allowance (MSA) or daily or travel subsistence allowance (DSA) is subsequently extended to one year or longer, the allowance may be paid as of the first day following discontinuation of MSA or DSA.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Category of duty stations

1.6 All duty stations are placed by the International Civil Service Commission in one of six categories, H and A to E. The H category comprises headquarters duty stations and other duty stations classified in the same category. The A to E categories comprise all other duty stations, classified by order of difficulty of conditions of life and work. Staff are informed of the category of their duty station by an annual information circular which may be amended in the course of the year owing to a change in classification.

Amount of the allowance

1.7 The amount of the allowance payable to each eligible staff member shall be a function of his or her placement on the three-dimensional matrix set out below, where the hardship element increases in order of difficulty, the mobility element varies according to the number of the assignment and the length of service at one duty station and the non-removal element varies according to the hardship category of the duty station.

Mobility and hardship matrix

Duty station category	Assignment number				
	1[a] 0%	2 10%	3 12%	4 14%	5 (or subsequent) 16%
	of midpoint of base/floor salary scale **H + M + N = Total** *(H = hardship element; M = mobility element;[b] N = non-removal element[c])*				
H – 0%	0 + 0 + 3 = 3	0 + 0 + 3 = 3	0 + 0 + 3 = 3	0 + 4[d] + 3 = 7[d]	0 + 6[d] + 3 = 9[d]
A – 0%	0 + 0 + 5 = 5	0 + 10 + 5 = 15	0 + 12 + 5 = 17	0 + 14 + 5 = 19	0 + 16 + 5 = 21
B – 8%	8 + 0 + 5 = 13	8 + 10 + 5 = 23	8 + 12 + 5 = 25	8 + 14 + 5 = 27	8 + 16 + 5 = 29
C – 15%	15 + 0 + 5 = 20	15 + 10 + 5 = 30	15 + 12 + 5 = 32	15 + 14 + 5 = 34	15 + 16 + 5 = 36
D – 20%	20 + 0 + 5 = 25	20 + 10 + 5 = 35	20 + 12 + 5 = 37	20 + 14 + 5 = 39	20 + 16 + 5 = 41
E – 25%	25 + 0 + 5 = 30	25 + 10 + 5 = 40	25 + 12 + 5 = 42	25 + 14 + 5 = 44	25 + 16 + 5 = 46

[a] Or less than five years' service.
[b] The amount paid on account of the mobility element is subject to reduction in accordance with sections 2.7 to 2.9.
[c] The amount paid on account of the non-removal element is for a limited period as defined in section 4.3.
[d] Subject to the conditions specified in section 2.2.

1.8 For staff in the Professional category or above, the amount of the allowance shall be determined by reference to the mid-point of the base/floor salary scale for a staff member at the P-4/step VI level, at the dependency rate. The resulting amount shall be paid to staff at the P-4 and P-5 level who have one or more recognized dependants. For other staff in the Professional category or above, the amount shall be adjusted as follows:

(a) For staff at the D-1 level and higher with one or more recognized dependants, the amount shall be increased by 13 per cent;

(b) For staff at the P-1 to P-3 levels with one or more recognized dependants, the amount shall be decreased by 13 per cent;

(c) Staff members in the Professional category or above who do not have recognized dependants shall

be paid at the single rate, representing 75 per cent of the amount corresponding to their grade.

1.9 For Field Service staff, the amount of the allowance shall be determined by reference to the dependency rate of the FS-7/step VI level of the Field Service category salary scale. The resulting amount shall be paid to staff at the FS-7 level who have one or more recognized dependants. For other Field Service staff members, the amount shall be adjusted as follows:

(a) For staff at the FS-1 to FS-6 levels with one or more recognized dependants, the amount shall be decreased by 13 per cent;

(b) Staff members in the Field Service category who do not have recognized dependants shall be paid at the single rate, representing 75 per cent of the amount corresponding to their grade.

1.10 For internationally recruited General Service staff, the amount shall be calculated and paid either at the dependency rate or at the single rate in the same manner as for staff at the P-1 to P-3 levels under section 1.8.

1.11 When staff members eligible for payment of the allowance are on temporary detail from their parent duty station, or on travel status, and receive MSA or DSA as a result, the allowance shall continue to be paid on the basis of their assignment at the parent duty station.

1.12 When two staff members are married to one another and each is entitled to the allowance, each shall be paid at the single rate. If there are one or more dependent children, the allowance shall be paid at the dependency rate to the staff member for whom the child or children are recognized as dependants. The same provision shall apply when one of the spouses is a staff member of another organization of the United Nations common system.

Section 2
Mobility element

Qualifying service

2.1 To qualify for payment of the mobility element of the allowance, a staff member must have five years' prior consecutive service as a staff member in the United Nations or another organization of the common system. Service credited towards the five-year requirement may include service as a staff member in one of the categories eligible for payment of the allowance under section 1.4, as well as prior service in a non-eligible category when allowed under section 2.6.

2.2 At all duty stations classified A to E, the mobility element is payable from the second assignment, provided the requirement of five years' continuing service has been met. At duty stations classified in the H category, the mobility element is payable from the fourth assignment, and only if the staff member has had two or more assignments, each for a period of one year or longer, at duty stations classified A to E.

2.3 Separate periods of service shall be considered as consecutive for the purpose of section 2.1 when their cumulative duration reaches five years within the prior six-year period, unless broken by one of the following occurrences: resignation, abandonment of post, summary dismissal or dismissal for misconduct, refusal to accept extension of appointment, agreed termination, termination for unsatisfactory service, separation from service under staff rule 104.14 (f) (ii) *a* of staff on probationary appointment. Separation due to other occurrences, such as non-renewal of fixed-term appointment, shall not break the period of service for the purposes of this section.

2.4 Service shall not be considered as broken by periods of special leave, but full months of special leave without pay shall not be credited towards the five-year service requirement.

Position on matrix — determining the assignment number

2.5 Initial appointments of one year or longer, whether or not they required official travel or gave rise to an assignment grant, and assignments of one year or longer which involve a change of duty station, shall be counted as one assignment for the purpose of determining the assignment number of the staff member and his or her position on the matrix set out in section 1.7. If a staff member is assigned to a duty station for a period of one year or longer which is subsequently reduced at the initiative of the Organization to less than one year, such service may be counted as an assignment on an exceptional basis.

2.6 Counting of assignments for purposes of establishing the position on the matrix in the special situations described below shall be made as follows:

(a) Periods of service on DSA or MSA for a period of one year or longer at the same duty station or on special mission shall be counted as one assignment for purposes of establishing the matrix position, but only on return to the parent duty station, or reassignment or transfer to a new parent duty station;

(b) For staff members who were previously locally recruited in the General Service and related categories or in the National Professional Officer category and who become eligible for payment of the allowance upon promotion or appointment to a category eligible for such payment, all prior periods of service of one year or longer in the country of recruitment shall be counted as one assignment;

(c) For locally recruited staff members in the General Service and related categories who are assigned to another duty station, or to an established field mission, outside the country of recruitment and as a result become eligible for payment of the allowance, the corresponding periods of service of one year or longer shall be counted as for staff in the Professional category. Prior service in the country of recruitment as a locally recruited staff member shall be counted as one assignment, in accordance with section 2.6 (b);

(d) For staff members who had previously served under an appointment of limited duration governed by the 300 series of the Staff Rules for a total period of at least one year and who become eligible for payment of the allowance upon appointment under the 100 or 200 series of the Staff Rules, the combined periods of prior service shall be counted as one assignment;

(e) Transfers, secondments and loans to other organizations of the United Nations common system shall be counted in the same manner as movements within the Organization;

(f) Periods of service of one year or longer as a Junior Professional Officer/Associate Programme Officer or as an Associate Expert shall be counted in accordance with the provisions of section 2.5. Periods of service as a United Nations Volunteer shall not be counted;

(g) For service prior to 1 July 1990, only uninterrupted periods of service of one year or longer at a duty station shall be counted. For the purposes of this provision, the period of service shall be considered interrupted by any break in service longer than 30 days; special leave without pay shall not be considered as a break in service. For service after 1 July 1990, counting of assignments shall be made in accordance with sections 2.5 and 2.6.

Reduction after five years of service at one duty station

2.7 After five years of service at one duty station, the amount paid on account of the mobility element shall be reduced by 10 percentage points on the matrix. For duty stations classified in the H category, the reduction shall be by 4 or 6 percentage points as appropriate. This reduction shall be made only once per assignment.

2.8 Exceptionally, payment of the unreduced amount of the mobility element may continue for a further period of up to one year upon certification, by a designated officer of the Office of Human Resources Management for staff serving in New York, by a designated officer of the Field Administration and Logistics Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for staff serving on missions and by the Director or Chief of Administration for staff serving at offices away from Headquarters, that:

(a) The staff member has not declined to be reassigned to another duty station before reaching the five-year limit and the needs of service require the staff member to remain at the duty station for a period exceeding five years; or

(b) The staff member is expected to be reassigned before the end of the sixth year. If the amount of the mobility element is reduced in the absence of such expectation, but the staff member is nevertheless reassigned to another duty station in the course of the sixth year, the unreduced amount shall be reinstated as of the beginning of the sixth year.

2.9 For purposes of reduction of the amount paid on account of the mobility element under sections 2.7 and 2.8, periods of service away from the parent duty station while the staff member is on temporary assignment or mission detail without a change of official duty station within the meaning of staff rule 101.6 shall not be taken into account when computing the length of time spent at the parent duty station. On return to the parent duty station, reckoning of the time spent at that duty station shall resume as from the point it was previously suspended.

2.10 The computing method set out in section 2.9 shall apply to all staff members as of 1 March 2000, the date on which the present instruction shall enter into force in accordance with section 8.1. **However, individual staff members may request that such method be applied in computing the length of their service at the parent duty station back to 1 January 1996 provided that they submit a written claim to that effect within three months of the date on which the present instruction comes into force. Requests submitted afterwards shall not be receivable.**

Section 3
Hardship element

3.1 The hardship element of the allowance shall be payable to eligible staff members who are assigned to duty stations classified in categories B, C, D and E from the beginning of their first assignment to any of those duty stations. The hardship element shall be payable at the level of the hardship classification of the duty station for the duration of the staff member's assignment.

3.2 If there is a change in the category of the duty station to which staff members are assigned during the course of an assignment, an appropriate adjustment shall be made in their placement on the matrix and in the amounts to which the staff member is entitled.

Section 4
Non-removal element

4.1 The non-removal element of the allowance shall be payable to eligible staff members who, on assignment to a duty station, did not have an entitlement to removal costs under staff rule 107.27, provided that an entitlement to the assignment grant exists. The non-removal element shall be payable to staff on initial appointment in their home country only when an assignment grant is paid. Staff members returning to their home country after one or more assignments outside their home country shall be entitled to payment of the non-removal element only if they had exercised a removal entitlement of their personal effects and household goods under staff rule 107.27 in connection with a prior assignment outside their home country and do not receive such removal on return to the home country.

4.2 When an assignment is for two years or longer, removal costs under staff rule 107.27 shall normally be paid in the case of assignment to H duty stations; the non-removal element shall normally be paid in the case of assignment to all other duty stations.

4.3 Payment of the non-removal element shall be limited to a period of five years at one duty station. Exceptionally, the period of payment may be extended for a further period of up to two years upon certification, by a designated officer of the Office of Human Resources Management for staff serving in New York, by a designated officer of the Field Administration and Logistics Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for staff serving on missions and by the Director or Chief of Administration for staff serving at offices away from Headquarters, that:

(a) The staff member has not declined to be reassigned to another duty station before reaching the five-year limit and the needs of service require the staff member to remain at the duty station for a period exceeding five years; or

(b) The staff member needs to remain at the duty station due to compelling circumstances.

4.4 Once payment of the non-removal element has stopped in accordance with section 4.3, an entitlement to removal shall arise only on change of duty station to an established office, or upon separation from service, when the staff member meets the conditions set out in staff rule 107.27 (a) (ii) or (iii).

Section 5
Modalities of payment of the allowance

5.1 The allowance shall normally be paid in United States dollars. Should the staff member request payment of salary and allowances in another currency, in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/402 of 23 March 1995, entitled "Currency of payment of salaries and allowances", payment shall be made at the United Nations operational rate of exchange prevailing on the date the payment is made. No adjustments shall be made to account for changes in exchange rates once the payment has been made.

5.2 The allowance shall normally be paid in advance on an annual basis. However, payment shall be made on a monthly basis for the first 12 months of new appointments.

5.3 The anniversary date for payment of the annual amount shall be determined by reference to the date of

the staff member's appointment or reassignment. However, in the case of a staff member appointed or assigned to a duty station with payment of DSA whose appointment or assignment is subsequently extended so that the subsistence payment is discontinued and the mobility and hardship allowance is granted, the anniversary date for payment of the allowance shall be the date on which payment of this entitlement commenced.

Section 6
Adjustments of advance payments

6.1 When the mobility and hardship allowance has been paid in advance and the staff member does not complete the period of service for which the allowance has been paid, adjustment and recovery shall be made on a pro rata basis for the period not served. Exceptions may be made in situations where compelling and/or compassionate reasons would so warrant.

6.2 Adjustments of advance payments shall be made if during the period covered by the advance payment there is a change of duty station, change of dependency status, promotion, completion of five years' consecutive service at the duty station, period on special leave, or separation. An adjustment shall also be made if a staff member receives a special post allowance to the P-4, D-1, or FS-7 level, thus giving rise to a higher amount of the allowance in accordance with sections 1.8 and 1.9.

Section 7
Relationship with rental subsidy

Amounts paid on account of the mobility and hardship allowance shall not be taken into account in the calculation of the rental subsidy to which staff members may be entitled.

Section 8
Final provisions

8.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 March 2000.

8.2 The following administrative instructions and information circulars are hereby abolished:

(a) ST/AI/363 and Corr.1 of 1 August and 17 August 1990, respectively, and ST/AI/363/Add.1 and 2 of 7 November 1990 and 8 March 1991, respectively;

(b) ST/IC/1990/28 of 5 May 1990;

(c) ST/IC/1990/37 of 24 May 1990;

(d) ST/IC/1997/28 of 5 May 1997;

(e) ST/IC/1997/38 of 26 June 1997.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General
for Management